REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of February 4, 2009 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the 3-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due. However, the Examiner is expressly authorized to charge any deficiencies to Deposit Account No. 14-1437.

Claims Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 1 and 6-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Landon, *et al.*, "Deploying Lotus Sametime on the eServer iSeries Server," Redbooks, June 2002 (hereinafter Landon) in view of U.S. Published Patent Application 2004/0064693 to Pabla, *et al.* (hereinafter Pabla). Claims 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Landon in view of Pabla, and in further view of U.S. Published Patent Application 2004/0267887 to Berger, *et al.* (hereinafter Berger).

Although Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejections, Applicants have amended Claim 1 in an effort to even more clearly define the present invention and facilitate prosecution of the instant application. Claims 36-37 have been added. The claim amendments and added claims are fully supported by the original disclosure and no new matter has been introduced.

Aspects of Applicants' Invention

It may be helpful to reiterate certain aspects of Applicants' invention prior to addressing the cited references. One embodiment of the invention, as typified by amended Claim 1, is a collaborative computing method.

The method can include providing a collaborative computing system comprising at least one instant messaging client, the collaborative computing system including presence

awareness features that automatically detect online entities that are logged into the collaborative computing system; initializing the instant messaging client within a graphical user interface of the collaborative computing system; and displaying within the graphical user interface an availability list consisting of the detected online entities.

The method also can include establishing at least one customizable search limitation for a search engine, the search limitation preventing users other than users belonging to a predetermined class of users from accessing data records pertaining to one or more predetermined online entities and preventing selected users from receiving data indicating an online presence of one or more predetermined online entities; receiving a search initializing action from the graphical user interface; responsive to the receiving step, presenting a search view having search input fields within the graphical user interface; receiving input via the input fields that specifies a customized search pattern; subject to the at least one search limitation, searching by the search engine at least one record source of the online entities in the availability list for online entities that satisfy the customized search pattern using the presence awareness features; and displaying a search result from the searching step within the graphical user interface.

The method further can include selecting at least one of the online entities displayed in the search result; and establishing a software-enhanced communication including at least one communication other than instant messaging type communications between a user of the instant messaging client and the selected online entity.

See, e.g., Specification, paragraphs [0008], [0031] and [0043] to [0044]; see also Fig. 5.

The Claims Define Over The Prior Art

The Lotus Sametime application integrates a multitude of collaborative software components together, including instant messaging components, chat components, Web conferencing components, co-browsing components, e-mail components, and the like.

The instant messaging component of Lotus Sametime can provide a degree of presence awareness, as all online users can be registered with an instant messaging service. This presence awareness is indicated through the presentation of currently online users within an instant messaging graphical user interface (GUI). The integrated nature of Lotus Sametime permits any of a variety of software-enhanced communications that include instant messaging as well as Web conferencing, chatting, co-browsing, and the like to be initiated from the instant messaging GUI. See Specification, paragraph [0005].

The presence awareness capabilities of Lotus Sametime.TM., however, are limited by the manner in which online users are presented within the instant messaging GUI. At present, online individuals registered for instant messaging communications appear within the instant messaging GUI in a haphazard fashion. That is, online users are not presented alphabetically or in a manner which is easily searchable by a user. This shortcoming has generally not been noticed, as typical instant messaging GUIs only display a limited number of registered contacts, i.e. those that have a point of presence. As this number grows, however, the usefulness of the inherent presence awareness capabilities provided within instant messaging GUIs diminishes since online users become increasingly difficult to locate within the GUI. This is especially true in situations involving potentially vast numbers of people, such as the people contained within a large organization, customer base, and/or large scale project. Consequently, the presence awareness capability of Lotus Sametime does not inherently result in usable, large scale presence awareness capabilities that can be applied to large organizations. At present, no other conventional collaboration software or software application extension includes presence awareness capabilities that can be used to enable user friendly, software-enhanced communications between people within a large organization. See Specification, paragraph [0006].

The present invention provides a method and a system for enhancing collaborative computing with customizable personnel searches. More specifically, collaborative

software can include presence awareness features that indicate which users and/or user groups are online. The presence awareness features can be implemented via an availability list somewhat analogous to the instant messaging GUI of many conventional instant messaging applications. The GUI displaying the availability list can permit a user to input a customized search pattern to locate one or more online entities, where an online entity can include a user and/or a group. A search can be performed against one or more record sources, such as a company intranet directory, a personal contact directory, and the like. A search result containing the online entities satisfying the search pattern can be responsively obtained. Further, the search results can be displayed to the user so that the user can directly initialize any variety of software-enhanced communication between the user and an online entity included in the search results. See Specification, paragraph [0007].

As already discussed in the previous responses, Landon describes the Lotus Sametime™ existing before the present invention. Landon does not disclose integrating online entity search capability into the instant messaging GUI such that a user of the instant messaging GUI can select an online entity from the search result that satisfies the search pattern and initiate an software-enhanced communication session not limited to instant messaging between the user and the selected online entity, as in the present invention.

It is noted that in the present invention, an availability list is first displayed within the GUI showing the online entities detected using the presence awareness features and then the record source of the online entities in the availability list can be searched against a customized search pattern so that a user can easily locate the person or group of persons who he or she wants to contact and who is online right now without going through the availability list, which can become very long for large organizations.

As already discussed in the previous responses, Figure 6-7 of Landon shows a Sametime Chat applet window and the "only Sametime function available here is Chat."

The user can find a person to contact by clicking "Browse" and then searching in the Domino Directory. It is noted that the Domino Directory, which is referred to as the Public Address Book or Name and Address Book, is a database that Domino creates automatically on every server. It is a directory of information about users, servers, and groups, as well as custom entries a user may add. Searching the Domino Directory cannot find online entities based on presence awareness. In other words, the person to contact found using the Domino Directory is not necessarily online.

The buddy list as disclosed in Landon cannot be compared with the availability list or the search result in the sense of the present invention because not everybody on the buddy list is necessarily online. In contrast, the availability list of the present invention is a list consisting of all detected online entities and the search result displays all online entities that match the search pattern.

Pabla discloses in paragraph [0114] that joining peers may search or query the instant messaging distributed index of presence information to discover the presence of other participating peers. However, Pabla does not disclose displaying within the graphical user interface an availability list consisting of the detected online entities. The disadvantage of Pabla is that the user does not have the chance to see who is online before initiating a search or query. For example, if the availability list is not long, the user will be able to see who is online immediately without the need to search.

Accordingly, the cited references, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest each and every element of Claims 1 and 36-37. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 36-37 define over the prior art. Furthermore, as each of the remaining claims depends from Claim 1 while reciting additional features, Applicants further respectfully submit that the remaining claims likewise define over the prior art.

Applicants thus respectfully request that the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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